

Online Research @ Cardiff

This is an Open Access document downloaded from ORCA, Cardiff University's institutional repository: <https://orca.cardiff.ac.uk/id/eprint/101474/>

This is the author's version of a work that was submitted to / accepted for publication.

Citation for final published version:

Edwards, Elizabeth 2017. Four Nations fiction by women, 1789-1830: Introduction. *Romantic Textualities: Literature and Print Culture, 1780-1840* (22) , pp. 11-20. 10.18573/j.2017.10150 file

Publishers page: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18573/j.2017.10150>
<<http://dx.doi.org/10.18573/j.2017.10150>>

Please note:

Changes made as a result of publishing processes such as copy-editing, formatting and page numbers may not be reflected in this version. For the definitive version of this publication, please refer to the published source. You are advised to consult the publisher's version if you wish to cite this paper.

This version is being made available in accordance with publisher policies.

See

<http://orca.cf.ac.uk/policies.html> for usage policies. Copyright and moral rights for publications made available in ORCA are retained by the copyright holders.



ROMANTIC TEXTUALITIES

LITERATURE AND PRINT CULTURE, 1780–1840



ISSN 1748-0116

ISSUE 22

SPRING 2017



◆ SPECIAL ISSUE : FOUR NATIONS FICTION BY WOMEN, 1789–1830 ◆

www.romtext.org.uk

◆ CARDIFF UNIVERSITY PRESS ◆

***Romantic Textualities: Literature and Print Culture, 1780–1840*, 22 (Spring 2017)**

Available online at <www.romtext.org.uk/>; archive of record at
<<https://publications.cardiffuniversitypress.org/index.php/RomText>>.

Journal DOI: 10.18573/ISSN.1748-0116 ♦ **Issue DOI:** 10.18573/n.2017.10148

Romantic Textualities is an open access journal, which means that all content is available without charge to the user or his/her institution. You are allowed to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search or link to the full texts of the articles in this journal without asking prior permission from either the publisher or the author. Unless otherwise noted, the material contained in this journal is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 (CC BY-NC-ND) International License. See <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/> for more information. Original copyright remains with the contributing author and a citation should be made when the article is quoted, used or referred to in another work.



Romantic Textualities is an imprint of Cardiff University Press, an innovative open-access publisher of academic research, where 'open-access' means free for both readers and writers. Find out more about the press at cardiffuniversitypress.org.



Cardiff University Press
Gwasg Prifysgol Caerdydd

Editors: Anthony Mandal, *Cardiff University*

Maximiliaan van Woudenberg, *Sheridan Institute of Technology*

Elizabeth Edwards (Guest Editor), *University of Wales*

Associate Editor: Nicola Lloyd, *Bath Spa University*

Reviews Editor: Katie Garner, *University of St Andrews*

Blog Editor: Emma Butcher, *University of Hull*

Editorial Assistant: Jannat Ahmed, *Cardiff University*

Platform Development: Andrew O'Sullivan, *Cardiff University*

Cardiff University Press Administrator: Alice Percival, *Cardiff University*

Advisory Board

Peter Garside (Chair), *University of Edinburgh*

Jane Aaron, *University of South Wales*

Stephen Behrendt, *University of Nebraska-Lincoln*

Emma Clery, *University of Southampton*

Benjamin Colbert, *University of Wolverhampton*

Gillian Dow, *Chawton House Library*

Edward Copeland, *Pomona College*

Gavin Edwards, *University of South Wales*

Penny Fielding, *University of Edinburgh*

Caroline Franklin, *Swansea University*

Isobel Grundy, *University of Alberta*

Ian Haywood, *University of Roehampton*

David Hewitt, *University of Aberdeen*

Gillian Hughes, *Independent Scholar*

Claire Lamont, *University of Newcastle*

Devoney Looser, *Arizona State University*

Robert Miles, *University of Victoria*

Christopher Skelton-Foord, *University of Durham*

Kathryn Sutherland, *University of Oxford*

Graham Tulloch, *Flinders University*

Nicola Watson, *Open University*

Aims and Scope: Formerly *Cardiff Corvey: Reading the Romantic Text* (1997–2005), *Romantic Textualities: Literature and Print Culture, 1780–1840* is an online journal that is committed to foregrounding innovative Romantic-studies research into bibliography, book history, intertextuality and textual studies. To this end, we publish material in a number of formats: among them, peer-reviewed articles, reports on individual/group research projects, bibliographical checklists and biographical profiles of overlooked Romantic writers. *Romantic Textualities* also carries reviews of books that reflect the growing academic interest in the fields of book history, print culture, intertextuality and cultural materialism, as they relate to Romantic studies.

FOUR NATIONS FICTION BY WOMEN, 1789–1830

Introduction

Elizabeth Edwards



IN MARY SMIRKE'S 'BETGELLERT BRIDGE' (Figure 1), a woman in a blue cloak leads a small child by the hand. Backs to the viewer, they are heading southeast along the bank of the River Colwyn in Beddgelert, in the foothills of Snowdon. It's a summer scene: the trees are in full leaf, the river looks low, and sunlight throws shadows behind the two figures. The copper-rich bulk of Mynydd Sygun rises sharply ahead of them.



FIG. 1. MARY SMIRKE, 'BETGELLERT BRIDGE, CARNARVONSHIRE',
AQUATINT ENGRAVING (C. 1808), NATIONAL LIBRARY OF WALES.

Smirke is not well known in her own right, but painting was in her blood: her Cumberland-born father, Robert Smirke, was a Royal Academician who was in turn the son of an itinerant painter. She had some success as a landscape artist and copyist, and exhibited her work at the Royal Academy between 1809 and

1814.¹ Her Beddgelert picture, reproduced here as an 1808 engraving, was probably produced just before this period, as part of a series of six topographical views of North Wales. The remaining five depict the castles at Conwy and Caernarfon, Valle Crucis Abbey just outside Llangollen, and two more scenes structured around bridges—Pont Aberglaslyn, southwest of Beddgelert, backed by another blue-grey mountain, and the gentler ‘View near Caernarvon’.² Smirke’s *Six Views in North Wales* is a stylish set of images but none of the others matches the narrative pull of ‘Betgellert Bridge’. Oblivious to the viewer behind them, diminutive and fragile against the landscape and buildings, Smirke’s pair of figures bring not just vitality but an element of inscrutability to this image. Who are they—a mother and her daughter perhaps? Where are they going—over the bridge or down the road beyond the left edge of the frame? What will the rest of their day bring in this part of turn-of-the-century Wales, in which regional seclusion was increasingly giving way to the tourist trail? Might there more to say about the artist, Mary Smirke?

A parallel train of thought, loosely applied, made ‘Betgellert Bridge’ the starting point for ‘Four Nations Fiction: Women and the Novel, 1780–1830’, an exploratory conference on genre, place and Romantic-period women’s writing, held at the National Library of Wales in 2013. As the questions above suggest, the composition of Smirke’s Beddgelert picture thematises gender and place, in a suspended or incomplete arrangement that in turn allows geographical and critical peripheries to come into focus. This collection of articles, which results from ‘Four Nations Fiction’, is similarly structured around the intersection of place with gender in terms of two vibrant research fields: the archipelagic or four nations turn within literary studies and the still-expanding map of Romantic-period women’s writing.

The 2013 conference was partly prompted by the appearance in quick succession of a number of extended studies of women writers, among them Anna Seward, Elizabeth Hamilton, Joanna Baillie and (more surprisingly) Margaret Holford Hodson, who had formerly occupied more peripheral positions in criticism of the period.³ Writers who might once have been allotted a single chapter (at best) in a wider account now seemed capable of sustaining critical narratives in a new way. During this time, Andrew Monnickendam showed that writers usually marked as minor figures could be productively reinterpreted as a group, as in his account of Mary Brunton, Susan Ferrier and Christian Isobel Johnstone in relation to the Scottish national tale.⁴ Also around the same time, developments in genre-focused criticism, such as Fiona Price’s work on historical fiction, were establishing the key role of women writers in inventing and defining whole areas of literary activity in the period.⁵

The interval between the conference and the publication of the following papers has seen further exciting shifts. A changing sense of the period’s reading public, with a particular focus on gender, can be seen in recent and ongoing work in several fields, including periodical culture, popular fiction and travel writing. Jennie Batchelor’s recently completed *Lady’s Magazine* project (‘Understanding the Emergence of a Genre’) shows this long-running periodical encompassing the whole of contemporary society from fashion to domestic economy, news and

politics, and literature of all categories.⁶ As documented in its wide-ranging blog, the project opens up ongoing questions about authorship, reception and remediation that have implications far beyond the study of magazines. New attention to popular fiction, meanwhile, is likely to reshape critical narratives about the novel in the period. Recent research on the prolific Minerva Press novelist ‘Mrs Meeke’, for example, has identified her as part of the Burney circle: Elizabeth Meeke was Frances Burney’s stepsister, and turns out to have surpassed Walter Scott as the most productive novelist of the Romantic period.⁷ Critical and editorial work-in-progress on travel literature, from infrastructure to coasts, in manuscript (a much-neglected area of the genre) as well as print, highlights the experience and construction of place in the period in ways that do not always or explicitly involve allegories of nation.⁸ As Mary-Ann Constantine shows in her essay included in the following collection, there is more to be said about the ways in which movement structures contemporary novels, as protagonists and plotlines travel within and around the British Isles especially.

Perhaps not coincidentally, all three of the areas detailed above redefine middlebrow territory as worthy of serious study, in forms of reading and writing that represent ‘an essential element of women’s authorial experience’, as Amy Culley has recently written of life writing (itself another currently expanding literary category).⁹ The broad context sketched above has been accompanied and furthered by continued efforts to edit and reissue novels, or by offering them, often for free, in digital formats, which have transformed the availability of many rarer titles.¹⁰ The reissue of lesser-studied works, such as Lady Morgan’s *The O’Briens and the O’Flahertys* (edited by Julia M. Wright for Broadview in 2013), Mary Brunton’s *Self-Control* (edited by Anthony Mandal for Pickering & Chatto in 2014) or Jane West’s *A Gossip’s Story* (edited by Devoney Looser, Melinda O’Connell and Caitlin Kelly for Valancourt Books in 2015), have moved these novels and their creators into new zones of reception and criticism. So much so, that the crucial role played by scholarly editing in the recovery of women’s writing over the last two to three decades, has itself become the subject of critical reflection, as in Amy Culley and Anna M. Fitzer’s forthcoming *Editing Women’s Writing, 1670–1840*. But as literary canons continue to be contested and reconfigured by new readings and editions, where should we be looking next, and why?

In a recent special issue of *The Eighteenth Century*, Devoney Looser argued for the need to see new connections within and configurations for the period, whether in the form of writers who are today less read than they once were (Catherine Hutton, Jane West, Mary Brunton), or new dialogues with and/or patterns of reception for the figures we now identify as most canonical within the period, particularly Jane Austen.¹¹ Both of these directions are strongly represented in this collection, in close readings of the largely forgotten fictions of Mary Barker, Ann Julia Hatton (‘Ann of Swansea’) and Anna Eliza Bray, as well as Catherine Hutton, in Scottish negotiations of metropolitan English radicalism, or in the first account of the reception of Wollstonecraft in Wales. And some of the shifts outlined above—towards magazine culture, popular fiction or travel—come into

particular focus via the writers and works mentioned above. Mary Brunton's *Self-Control*, an overnight sensation on its publication in 1811, is a case in point, moving as it does between the Scottish Highlands, London and eventually Canada, though publishing successes on this scale (*Self-Control* was reissued throughout the nineteenth century) will inevitably not reduce down to any easily defined set of criteria. In the course of the novel, Brunton depicts not just an internally divided Britain but a divided Scotland via her Gaelic-speaking central figure, Laura Montreville.¹² Yet this work is not exactly a national tale, nor a novel of ideas. Nor does the label of evangelical fiction, which *Self-Control* picked up virtually from its first appearance, fully explain its hybrid status as realism meshed with romance, or account for its eroticism or violence, as Anthony Mandal has pointed out.¹³ But the capacity of this work, and others like it, for taking on contemporary moral or political questions in something other than a highbrow form often opens up through approaches to place. The bestselling Jane West's 1799 novel, *A Tale of the Times*, presents Scotland and Wales as spaces in which to test out competing models of national belonging. Catherine Hutton, who 'has remained almost completely absent from the historical record' in a way that does not reflect her reputation in her own time, explores the changing literary marketplace, the boundaries between genres and forms (fiction, travel, the letter, the essay) or the development of realism, partly through fictional journeys.¹⁴

The four nations or archipelagic approach that defines this special issue emphasises the multiple nations and regions within the British Isles, as a series of comparative, overlapping or imagined spaces. Reflecting this multiplicity, collections such as Sheffield Hallam University's *CW3: Corvey Women Writers on the Web* database, or Cardiff University's *British Fiction 1800–1829: A Database of Production, Circulation & Reception* abound with titles that reference places in Britain and Ireland (as well as continental Europe), and which are set anywhere from the middle ages to the present day.¹⁵ Even a brief look through these databases' long lists of unfamiliar works featuring 'Caledonian Sirens', 'Romance in Wales', as well as a host of national and regional markers among the moral tales and historical fictions, reveals the Romantic-period novel as perhaps unexpectedly constructed around domestic space—though it can obviously be impossible to tell where a novel is set from the title alone. Ann Julia Hatton's final novel *Gerald Fitzgerald: An Irish Tale* (1831) clearly signals location, but there's no hint in the title of her 1821 *Lovers and Friends; or, Modern Attachments* that this is essentially a Lake District novel.

Evolving out of earlier forms of romance and travel, eighteenth-century fiction is of course a fluid genre. But in a period of empire and war, and constitutional change both within Britain and Ireland and on a global scale, fiction then as now offered real and relevant ways of representing lived or imagined experience. Elements of place, mobility, nation and identity feature strongly in these representations, while the emergence of the national tale as a means of voicing competing cultures and resistant perspectives in the later part of the period is by now well understood. As the articles in this collection show, categories of region and na-

tion repeatedly arise in narratives that depict physical movement in terms of plot, or that move ideologically or conceptually across the internal borders of Britain and Ireland. And yet these novels of nation/s are—as in the case of *Self-Control* above—not usually, let alone exclusively, national tales in the sense that Ina Ferris has defined it, as a form that ‘takes national manners for its subject’ or ‘articulate[s] the grievances of a small people’.¹⁶ As Penny Fielding points out in her account of Dorothea Primrose Campbell’s 1821 Shetland novel, *Harley Radington: A Tale*, such works were created in the wider context of a form of national or regional novel that was still emerging, and still aspiring to generic distinctiveness.¹⁷ A host of contemporary fictions inflected by nation, region, historical horizons or the gothic, some of which are discussed here, join *Harley Radington* in demonstrating the provisional and heterogeneous quality of the Romantic national tale, and beyond that the form of the novel in general.¹⁸

This wider body of work has not been extensively studied. But building on the work of Devoney Looser, Jennie Batchelor and others, this collection of articles aims to contribute to an emerging new landscape of Romantic-period women’s writing. What might this landscape be like? The inclusion of writers such as Jane West and Mary Brunton may mean recovering and perhaps rethinking more of the conservative or evangelical fiction popular in the first years of the nineteenth century—work recently begun by Anthony Mandal.¹⁹ It may involve identifying new directions within travel writing, antiquarian writing, or the miscellaneous forms of the national tale and historical novel, especially those by lesser-known writers. It may mean engaging more widely with work issued by publishers of popular fiction, or with the place of prose fiction in periodical outlets, or in manuscript form—all areas currently under research.²⁰ As a means of retrieving a number of little-known authors and novels, the articles brought together here focus on the ways in which geography offers women writers structuring principles, plot devices, polemical points of entry, access to real or symbolic orders, or to recognisable aesthetic discourses—often simultaneously.

This collection’s guiding framework of four nations fiction emphasises literary and cultural exchange throughout. The following articles present, for example, the figures of Mary Wollstonecraft or Robert Bage filtered through the prism of Wales. They explore negotiations of Irishness or Englishness across contemporary novels and other art forms: Jane Austen in relation to Regina Maria Roche or Thomas Moore. They discuss the distribution, perception and representation of boundaries, limits and restrictions in the period, from politics, social convention and religion to women writers’ often uneasy relationship with the concept (and consequences) of publication. They open up new themes, such as the role of infrastructure in national fiction or the connections between antiquarian knowledge and the form of the novel.

In the first of these articles, Mary Chadwick takes a transnational perspective on the little-known Mary Barker to reveal a formally and conceptually noteworthy novelist. In Chadwick’s account, Barker’s *A Welsh Story* (1798) features as an experimental novel, ‘an exploration of lives lived according to the Wollstonecraftian

principle of sound, rational education' (p. 22). As this quotation will suggest, Chadwick's article addresses a gap in the British reception of Wollstonecraft, in a careful and sustained tracing of the overlaps between Barker's novel and Wollstonecraft's second *Vindication*. Though acknowledging that 'Barker is not idealistic enough to suggest that the country is immune to the spread of metropolitan values' (p. 32), Chadwick argues that in this novel Wales (specifically Glamorgan in South Wales), defined by its distance from London, represents a microcosm of the ideal British state: a benevolent, enlightened space in which women may become citizens of a rational society, or in which to stage 'a [...] "REVOLUTION in female manners"' (p. 32).

Whether they agreed with her or not, few of Wollstonecraft's contemporaries ignored her. The second article in the collection, by Yi-Cheng Weng, moves from Wollstonecraft as exemplar to object of satire, in the still 'not yet fully acknowledged' work of the Scottish novelist Elizabeth Hamilton (p. 37). Weng draws out Hamilton's Scottish context as crucial in her construction of a conservative, Christianised moral philosophy for women in *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers* (1800), a novel that sets the themes of education and rational reflection to very different purposes from those of *A Welsh Story*. As in Barker's novel, however, dialogues based on place feature strongly in this work, which sets up a London-Edinburgh opposition in order to contemplate competing models of social theory, manners and morals. Weng's discussion also brings out the nuanced quality of fiction written by women in response to contemporary politics, recognising Hamilton's novel as part of a slower and longer paper war than the one usually associated with the 1790s, in which the form of the novel was part of a wider battleground for political and cultural authority.

Articles three and four, by Nicola Lloyd and Andrew McInnes respectively, shift attention to Ireland and England, via two of the more canonical figures within this collection: Sydney Owenson (Lady Morgan) and Jane Austen. However both articles bring new, and place-driven, perspectives, in Lloyd's close reading of Owenson's little-discussed novel *O'Donnel* (1814) and McInnes's analysis of *Emma* (1816) in relation to a particularly spectral form of Irish gothic that emerges in part from Austen's use of material whose meanings may be less immediately recognisable to modern readers than they were to contemporary ones. Building on the work of Claire Connolly, Lloyd's article investigates the representation of Irish space and infrastructure in *O'Donnel* to show how geography 'becomes a site of cultural anxiety in the Romantic national tale' in both local and wider contexts (p. 53). The concept of improvement is central to this analysis, which illustrates the tensions between the notion of improvement-as-incorporation—as a threat to Ireland's identity—and improvement as a necessary element of modernity and progress. Lloyd shows how Owenson's perception of the ambiguities around the debate prompts a new realism within her work, in a new form of national tale that 'offers a fuller engagement with the contemporary context of Irish improvement in the post-union period' (pp. 56–57). For Owenson, Lloyd argues, the conflict between politicised and aesthetic experiences is overwhelming, and points

towards the conclusion that the cultural history of Ireland cannot be mapped by an imperial system of improvement: instead, progress ‘can only emerge from within Ireland itself’ (p. 63).

Questions of perspective and cross-cultural conflict also lie at the centre of Andrew McInnes’s study of *Emma* (1816), a novel sometimes described as a kind of English national tale. McInnes, however, demonstrates that *Emma* almost invisibly derives considerable energy from disavowed Irish dynamics. His reading of this work identifies an othered Ireland as a force that threatens to fracture the tight-knit English identity Austen’s novel celebrates. Mapping out a gothic geography on *Emma*’s margins, McInnes shows that the novel’s intertextual relationship with *The Children of the Abbey* (1796), a popular gothic romance by the Irish novelist Regina Maria Roche—little-known today but a strong contender for the most four nations of all Romantic-period novels for its Wales–London–Ireland–Scotland plotline—and also with Thomas Moore’s *Irish Melodies*, complicates and arguably compromises its prevailing mood and message by articulating unspeakable desires, and silenced histories.


Numbers five and six return the focus to Wales, in accounts of two writers who deserve further study: Ann Julia Hatton (‘Ann of Swansea’) and Catherine Hutton. Both were long-lived, wide-ranging writers: Hatton (who was a younger sister to Sarah Siddons) as a poet, librettist and author of some fourteen novels, and Hutton as an editor, novelist, travel writer and journalist. The Worcester-born, Atlantic-travelling Ann Hatton’s reinvention of herself as ‘Ann of Swansea’ was, as Jane Aaron points out here, ‘an unusual move in any epoch’ but it was ‘virtually unprecedented’ in the early years of the nineteenth century (p. 78). In this article, Aaron traces first the emergence of Hatton’s politically radical, proto-feminist and Welsh identities—the first of these sharpened by her experiences of 1790s America—and then her fictional representations of Wales. Like Barker’s *A Welsh Story* before it, her first novel, *Cambrian Pictures* (1810), links Welsh locations with ‘a harmonious state in which the inhabitants are at one with nature’ (p. 82), in opposition to an English gentry class that embodies corruption and avarice. Her later novels, though, register more complex views. *Chronicles of an Illustrious House* (1816) is a biting *roman-à-clef*—with a manuscript key—that satirises the fashionable, socially-aspiring inhabitants of Swansea (‘Gooselake’ in the novel) on the South Wales coast. And yet Hatton clearly remained invested to some extent in the notion of Welsh exceptionalism, as in her 1822 novel, *Guilty or Not Guilty*, which revives some of the ‘native virtues’ that structure *Cambrian Pictures*. In that novel, Aaron notes, Hatton depicts Welsh women as freer and hardier than their English equivalents, who are more often than not confined to prison-like urban existences intolerable to the ‘mountaineer [...] pure and honest’ (p. 83).

Hatton’s opposition of Welsh liberty and English confinement forms the central theme of Catherine Hutton’s second novel, *The Welsh Mountaineer* (1817), discussed here by Mary-Ann Constantine. Constantine shows that as a travel writer, Hutton (sometimes drawing on Thomas Pennant’s landmark *A Tour in Wales*, published between 1778 and 1783) registers an open-minded ‘curiosity

about Welsh culture and history', in precise and dynamic accounts of being on the road (p. 92). How far it might be possible to chart changing technologies of periodical publication and of travel on the form of the novel perhaps remains to be seen, but this article makes a start by tracing the close relationship between Hutton's firsthand experience of the home tour and its fictionalised forms in her three novels. As Constantine shows, travel and fiction are mutually reinforcing in Hutton's writing career: the travel narratives confirm that her 'profoundly utopian view of Wales as a space of physical freedom for women' in her novels is 'not only a literary trope, and should be taken seriously' (p. 97). To draw connections across individual works and across the period, Hutton's fiction also synthesises several of the themes discussed above, from Ann Hatton's polemically idealised Wales to Mary Barker's endorsement of Wollstonecraft. Hutton's 1819 novel *Oakwood Hall*, which is subtitled 'including a description of the lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland, and a part of South Wales', depicts Wollstonecraft as a 'daring and ardent' pioneer: an enduring touchstone for women writers still feeling their way along the boundaries identified and challenged by her.

The final essay in this collection, by Diane Duffy, explores a different set of limits and boundaries for women writers, at the very end of the period discussed here. Duffy's piece offers the first modern critical account of the Devon-based Anna Eliza Bray, whose fictional, historical and biographical works on subjects ranging from local legends to the life of Handel—amounting to more than twenty volumes in total—brought her popular success in the mid-nineteenth century. Duffy focuses on Bray's negotiation of the literal and formal spaces of writing, and the effects of place or location on her construction of a fictional mode that could also accommodate political history, antiquarianism and topography. Like Catherine Hutton, Bray emerges in this article as an informed and intrepid figure, willing to confront boundaries physically (as in her antiquarian fieldwork) and in her writing life. Duffy argues that Bray aimed to represent 'the private face of public history' in novels that weave family documents (letters, diaries) into works that are also framed by scholarly prefaces and footnotes (p. 107). But fashioning an English national tale with the capacity for memorialising regional history and tradition in the new world of the United Kingdom was also, Duffy suggests, top of Bray's writerly agenda: nostalgia and elegy characterise her regional romances, in a distinctive fusion of antiquarian enquiry with Anglican loyalism.

Anna Eliza Bray's long writing career offers one route to determining the role of a region or locality in the nineteenth century's new age of union. But emphasising place also creates entry points for writers who have not benefited from the recovery project of recent decades, and which remains particularly uneven in terms of differences of language and nation. There are signs, however, that novels known until now only as titles on database lists will receive new attention. Currently underway, for example, is *The Cambridge Guide to the Eighteenth-Century Novel, 1660–1820*, edited by April London, which will be simultaneously published in print and online (the print version is expected to run to 10 volumes). This work—the most ambitious and comprehensive to date—will provide critical summaries

of fictions from the period at all stages of reception, from the canonical, such as Lady Morgan's *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806), to the currently emerging, such as Jane West's medievalist *Alicia de Lacy* (1814), to the unknown, as in Sarah Lansdell's Welsh-set *The Tower; or, the Romance of Ruthyne* (1798). The challenge from that point onwards might be to move from this kind of bibliographical work, expansive (and hugely welcome) though it will be, to more qualitative and interpretive accounts—a position to which the articles in this collection aspire. 

NOTES

Professor Harriet Guest warmly supported the 2013 conference on which this collection is based. Harriet's pioneering work on women's writing of the long eighteenth century will be directly and indirectly felt in several of the articles in the following collection, which is dedicated to her with gratitude and respect.

1. Tina Fiske, 'Smirke, Robert (1753–1845)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford: OUP, 2004) <www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25762> [accessed 13 Mar 2016].
2. Aquatint engravings of Smirke's *Six Views in North Wales* are held in the collections of the National Library of Wales: see e.g. 'Conway Castle' <[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Conway_Castle_\(1133139\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Conway_Castle_(1133139).jpg)>.
3. Claudia Kairoff, *Anna Seward and the End of the Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011); Claire Grogan, *Politics and Genre in the Works of Elizabeth Hamilton* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012); Judith Bailey-Slagle, *Romantic Appropriations of History: The Legends of Joanna Baille and Margaret Holford Hodson* (Plymouth: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2012).
4. Andrew Monnickendam, *The Novels of Walter Scott and his Literary Relations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). Monnickendam notes at the outset of his discussion that 'giving the three novelists critical independence' produces 'a more complex and diverse picture of their writing' (p. 1).
5. Fiona Price (ed.), 'Romantic Women Writers and the Fictions of History', special issue of *Women's Writing*, 19.3 (2012), and *Reinventing Liberty: Nation, Commerce and the Historical Novel from Walpole to Scott* (Edinburgh: EUP, 2016). See also *Reading Historical Fiction: The Revenant and Remembered Past*, ed. by Kate Mitchell and Nicola Parsons (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
6. For 'The Lady's Magazine: Understanding the Emergence of a Genre' Leverhulme-funded research project and blog, see <www.kent.ac.uk/english/ladys-magazine/>.
7. Simon Macdonald, 'Identifying Mrs Meeke: Another Burney Family Novelist', *Review of English Studies*, 64 (2013), 367–85 <<https://doi.org/10.1093/res/hgs141>>.
8. Some sixty previously unpublished tours of Wales and Scotland—including familiar figures such as Hester Piozzi and Jane West, as well as those unknown to us beyond their handwritten home tours—will be published online as part of the AHRC-funded research project 'Curious Travellers: Thomas Pennant and the Welsh and Scottish Tour (1760–1820)' <<http://curioustravellers.ac.uk/en/>>.
9. Amy Culley, 'Women's Life Writing in the Long 18th Century: A Critical Survey', *Literature Compass*, 12.1 (2015), 2 <<https://doi.org/10.1111/lic3.12201>>.
10. See e.g. Chawton House's *Novels Online* series <www.chawtonhouse.org/?page_id=55488>.

11. Devoney Looser, 'Introduction: Jane Austen and her Contemporaries', *The Eighteenth Century*, 56.2 (Summer 2015), 147–49 <<https://doi.org/10.1353/ecy.2015.0017>>.
12. Juliet Shields addresses the internally divided nature of eighteenth-century Scotland, and its effects on the development of a distinctively Scottish form of the national tale, in *Sentimental Literature and Anglo-Scottish Identity, 1745–1820* (Cambridge: CUP, 2010).
13. See 'Introduction', Mary Brunton, *Self-Control*, ed. by Anthony Mandal (London and Brookfield, VT: Pickering & Chatto, 2014), pp. xiii–xliii.
14. Cheryl A. Wilson, "'Something like mine": Catherine Hutton, Jane Austen, and Feminist Recovery Work', *The Eighteenth Century*, 56.2 (Summer 2015), 151 <<https://doi.org/10.1353/ecy.2015.0010>>.
15. See, respectively, <<http://extra.shu.ac.uk/convey/>> and <www.british-fiction.cf.ac.uk/>.
16. Ina Ferris, *The Romantic National Tale and the Question of Ireland* (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), p. 50.
17. Penny Fielding, 'Genre, Geography and the Question of the National Tale: D. P. Campbell's *Harley Radington*', *European Romantic Review*, 23 (2012), 593–611 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/10509585.2012.709797>>.
18. Fielding observes that '[t]he national tale is eclectic in its generic relationships, mixing motifs from sentimental and courtship novels, and growing up alongside the historical novel with which it exchanges ideas, themes and tropes' (*ibid.*, p. 599).
19. Anthony Mandal, 'Evangelical Fiction', in *The Oxford History of the Novel in English, Volume 2: English and British Fiction, 1750–1820*, ed. by Peter Garside and Karen O'Brien (Oxford: OUP, 2015), pp. 255–72.
20. See, e.g., Emily C. Friedman, 'Manuscript Fiction in the Archive', *18th-Century Common* (June 2016) <www.18thcenturycommon.org/manuscript-fiction-archive/>.

REFERRING TO THIS ARTICLE

E. EDWARDS. 'Four Nations Fiction by Women, 1789–1830: Introduction', *Romantic Textualities: Literature and Print Culture, 1780–1840*, 22 (Spring 2017) <<https://doi.org/10.18573/j.2017.10150>> [date accessed].

COPYRIGHT INFORMATION

This article is © 2017 The Author and is the result of the independent labour of the scholar credited with authorship. For full copyright information, see page 2.

Date of acceptance: 18 March 2017.



NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS



Jane Aaron is Emeritus Professor of Literature at the University of South Wales. Her publications include *A Double Singleness: Gender and the Writings of Charles and Mary Lamb* (1991), *Pur fel y Dur: Y Gymraes yn Llên Menywod y Bedwaredd Ganrifar Bymtheg* (Pure as steel: The Welshwoman in nineteenth-century women's writing, 1998), *Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing in Wales* (2007), *Welsh Gothic* (2013), and the co-edited volumes, *Out of the Margins: Women's Studies in the Nineties* (1991), *Our Sisters' Land: The Changing Identities of Women in Wales* (1994), *Postcolonial Wales* (2005) and *Gendering Border Studies* (2010). She is also the general editor of Honno Press's English-language *Welsh Women's Classics* series.

David Buchanan is a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of English and Film Studies at the University of Alberta and an Instructor in the Centre for Humanities at Athabasca University, Canada.

Alison Cardinale is the Assistant Head of Learning and Curriculum English at MLC School where she teaches the International Baccalaureate alongside senior English courses. Alison is commencing the third year of research for a PhD at the University of Sydney in 2015, focusing on the poetry of Samuel Taylor Coleridge under the supervision of Professor Will Christie. Recently, Alison has worked as an undergraduate English tutor at the University of Sydney and has ten years' experience teaching English in independent Sydney secondary schools.

James Castell is a Lecturer in English Literature at Cardiff University, where he teaches courses on Romantic and twentieth-century poetry and poetics. He has articles on Wordsworth in *The Oxford Handbook to William Wordsworth* and *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature*, and is currently completing a monograph on Wordsworth and animal life.

Mary Chadwick is an Associate Research Fellow in the Department of English and Creative Writing at the University of Huddersfield where she worked on *The Anne Clifford Project*. Mary's research interests include women's writing, manuscript cultures, book history and Welsh writing in English from the very long eighteenth century.

Koenraad Claes is a Postdoctoral Fellow at Ghent University (Belgium), where he is employed on the three-year individual research project *Narratives of Continuity: Form and Function of the British Conservative Novel in the Long Nineteenth*

Century, funded by the Research Foundation, Flanders (FWO). Before that, he was a Leverhulme Postdoctoral Research Associate on the project *The Lady's Magazine: Understanding the Emergence of a Genre*, led by Prof. Jennie Batchelor at the University of Kent. His first monograph, a history of the late-Victorian little magazine, is under contract with Edinburgh University Press. He is the managing editor of the open-access journal *Authorship* <www.authorship.ugent.be>.

Mary-Ann Constantine is Reader at the University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies. She works on Welsh and British literature of the long eighteenth century and has also written on travel writing, folk song, authenticity debates and the Romantic movement in Brittany. Her book on the Welsh stonemason poet Edward Williams, *The Truth against the World: Iolo Morganwg and Romantic Forgery*, appeared in 2007. With Dafydd Johnston, she is general editor of the multivolume *Wales and the French Revolution* series. She is currently leading an AHRC-funded research project, *Curious Travellers: Thomas Pennant and the Welsh and Scottish Tour 1760–1820*.

Richard De Ritter is a lecturer at the University of Leeds and the author of *Imagining Women Readers, 1789–1820: Well-Regulated Minds*.

Diane Duffy was awarded a PhD from the University of Manchester in 2011 on the subject of history, gender and identity in the writings of Anna Eliza Bray (1790–1883). She has presented a number of conference papers on how Bray's regional romances, set in the south-west of England, might be viewed as instrumental in shaping a sense of English national identity in the form of an English national tale. She is currently working as a researcher at the Elizabeth Gaskell House in Manchester.

Elizabeth Edwards is a Research Fellow at the University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, Aberystwyth. Her publications include *English-Language Poetry from Wales 1789–1806* (University of Wales Press, 2013) and *Richard Llwyd: Beaumaris Bay and Other Poems* (Trent Editions, 2016). She is currently working on a monograph on Wales and women's writing in the period 1789–1830.

Ruth Knezevich is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Otago (Dunedin, New Zealand) where she is working on a Marsden-funded project on the nineteenth-century Porter family—novelists Jane and Anna Maria Porter and their brother, the artist and traveller Robert Ker Porter. She received her PhD in 2015 from the University of Missouri for her research on footnotes in late-eighteenth and early nineteenth-century literary works; she continues this research with a distant reading of the footnote in women's writing of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Jakub Lipski is Assistant Professor in the Department of English, Kazimierz Wielki University, Bydgoszcz, Poland. Before obtaining his PhD in English literature, he studied English, Art History and Cultural Studies. He is the author of *In Quest of the Self: Masquerade and Travel in the Eighteenth-Century Novel—Fielding, Smollett, Sterne* (2014) and co-editor (with Jacek Mydla) of *The Enchantress of Words, Sounds and Images: Anniversary Essays on Ann Radcliffe (1764–1823)* (2015). He is currently working on a monograph on the correspondences between the eighteenth-century English novel and the fine arts.

Nicola Lloyd is Senior Lecturer in English Literature at Bath Spa University. She specializes in fiction of the Romantic period, with a particular focus on the Irish national tale and the interactions between Romanticism and Enlightenment. Her doctoral thesis, which she is currently preparing for publication, considered the influence of Enlightenment discourses of moral philosophy and perception on Romantic-period fiction. Nicky has published articles on the Irish novelist Lady Morgan and is one of the authors of *The Palgrave History Gothic Publishing: The Business of Gothic Fiction, 1764–1835*, due for completion in 2017. She is currently preparing a scholarly edition of Mary Julia Young's gothic-national tale *Donalda; or, the Witches of Glenshiel* (1805).

Andrew McInnes is Senior Lecturer in English Literature at Edge Hill University. He has recently published his first monograph, *Wollstonecraft's Ghost: The Fate of the Female Philosopher in the Romantic Period* (Routledge, 2016). His research interests include women's writing of the long eighteenth century, the geographies of gothic fiction and children's literature.

Amy Prendergast is currently based in the School of English, Trinity College Dublin. She completed her doctoral studies there in 2012 after being awarded a four-year PRTL Government of Ireland scholarship. She was subsequently the recipient of an Irish Research Council Postdoctoral Fellowship, which allowed her to work on her first monograph. This work, *Literary Salons across Britain and Ireland in the Long Eighteenth Century*, is forthcoming with Palgrave Macmillan.

Corrina Radioff is studying for a PhD at the University of Liverpool on the history and function of pre-chapter epigraphs in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novels. She manages the social media pages for *Digital Defoe: Studies in Defoe and his Contemporaries* and maintains a personal blog, *The Age of Oddities: Reading the Eighteenth Century* <<http://ageofoddities.blogspot.co.uk>>, to encourage readers of all tastes and backgrounds to enjoy the delights of eighteenth-century literature. She has written for the *Johnsonian Newsletter* and the British Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies *Criticks* website.

Joanna E. Taylor is Research Associate in Geospatial Innovation in the Digital Humanities at the University of Lancaster. She recently completed her PhD at

Keele University: her thesis, entitled 'Writing spaces: the Coleridge Family's Interactive Poetics 1798–1898', explored the use of poetic spaces in negotiating influence anxieties in the works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's children and grandchildren. She is the Cartography Curator for the *Gravestone Project* and is the Editorial Assistant for the *Byron Journal*. She can be found on Twitter @JoTayl0r0.

Yi-Cheng Weng is Adjunct Assistant Professor at National Tsing Hua University. She is also teaching as adjunct lecturer at National Taiwan University, National Chengchi University and National Taiwan University of Arts. Her PhD, entitled 'Conservative Women: Revolution and the British Novel, 1789–1815', was awarded by King's College London in 2016. She has written articles on women's writing, treating topics including the private and public spheres, anti-Jacobin novels, conservative women writers and femininity, and the history of the novel.

Jane Wessel is an Assistant Professor of British Drama at Austin Peay State University. She has published articles in *Theatre Survey* and *Restoration: Studies in English Literary Culture, 1660–1700* and is currently working on a book project on literary property and dramatic authorship in eighteenth-century England. She tweets about theatre history, pedagogy and eighteenth-century culture @Jane_D_Wessel.

